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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-01	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	WHA-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01
	FAAE-00	FBO-01	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	NEA-01	DCP-01
	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIG-03	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	OPR-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	FMP-00	IMCC-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/033W	
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P 261811Z FEB 99
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5442
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
FBI WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 000920

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/03
TAGS: PTER, KPRP, PREL, PGOV, IS, AR
SUBJECT: TERRORIST BOMBINGS UPDATE: AMIA JUDGE POINTS
FINGER AT HIZBALLAH AND ACQUITS MOKHTARI

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REF: 98 BUENOS AIRES 6630

CLASSIFIED BY V. MANUEL ROCHA, CHARGE. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE JUDGE INVESTIGATING THE 1994 AMIA BOMBING HAS ACQUITTED IRANIAN NATIONAL NASRIM MOHKTARI OF INVOLVEMENT DUE TO A LACK OF EVIDENCE. IN DOING SO, HE POINTED THE FINGER AT HIZBALLAH FOR THE BOMBING AND CLAIMED THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN HIZBALLAH AND THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE CALLED ON THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO FORMAL GOA REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE ATTACK, AND ON THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEEPEN ITS PROBE INTO WILSON DOS SANTOS' ROLE IN THE ATTACKS. THE AMIA AND ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBING

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INVESTIGATIONS APPEAR TO BE HEADED TOWARD CLOSURE, WITH
LITTLE CHANCE OF IDENTIFYING THE RESPONSIBLE PARTIES. END
SUMMARY.

MOKHTARI ACQUITTED

2. (U) ON FEBRUARY 24, JUDGE JUAN GALEANO, THE CHIEF
PROSECUTOR IN THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE 1994 BOMBING OF
THE ARGENTINE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER (AMIA) RELEASED A
LENGTHY RULING IN WHICH HE REPORTED ON HIS INQUIRY INTO THE
REPUTED PARTICIPATION IN THE ATTACK BY NASRIM MOKHTARI, AN
IRANIAN FORMERLY RESIDENT IN ARGENTINA. GALEANO LAID OUT
HIS INVESTIGATION FOLLOWING HER ARREST AT EZEIZA AIRPORT
LATE LAST YEAR. IN THE END, THE JUDGE AGREED WITH ESTEBAN
CANEVARI, HIS SUPREME COURT COUNTERPART LEADING THE
INVESTIGATION INTO THE 1992 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY,
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WHO IN LATE DECEMBER RULED THAT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT
EVIDENCE TO CHARGE MOKHTARI (SEE REFTEL).

3. (U) GALEANO'S RULING DID POINT OUT CERTAIN
"INCONSISTENCIES" IN MOKHTARI'S TESTIMONY (SUCH AS HER
RELATIONS WITH A FORMER ARGENTINE POLITICIAN WHO HELPED HER
OBTAIN AN ARGENTINE PASSPORT, HER WHEREABOUTS ON THE DATE
OF THE AMIA ATTACK, AND HOW OFTEN SHE HAD VISITED THE
IRANIAN EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES). WHILE SHE ADMITTED TO
MUCH OF WHAT COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS "SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY"
INVOLVING HER PAST IN BUENOS AIRES, SHE FLATLY DENIED
ANYTHING WHICH COULD HAVE INCRIMINATED HER. WITH THE
RETRACTION BY THE BRAZILIAN WILSON DOS SANTOS OF HIS
EARLIER TESTIMONY, THE JUDGE HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO DROP
THE CHARGES AGAINST HER. GALEANO CALLED ON HIS BRAZILIAN
COLLEAGUES TO CONTINUE THEIR INVESTIGATIONS INTO DOS
SANTOS' ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO REQUESTED THAT GOA LAW
ENFORCEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES CONTINUE THEIR
EFFORTS TO DETERMINE THE BONA FIDES OF DOS SANTOS' CLAIMS.

IRAN-HIZBALLAH CONNECTION

4. (U) IN THE SAME RULING, GALEANO PROVIDED BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON THE ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBING, NOTING THAT
ISLAMIC JIHAD HAD CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK TO
AVENGE THE KILLING OF HIZBALLAH LEADER ALI ABBAS MUSAWI.
GALEANO STATED THAT FOLLOWING THE 1992 BOMBING, ARGENTINA
REMAINED A VULNERABLE TARGET TO ANOTHER TERRORIST ATTACK
USING SIMILAR TACTICS. FOLLOWING THE MAY 1994 CAPTURE OF

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MUSTAFA DIRANI BY ISRAELI TROOPS IN THE BEKKA VALLEY,
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HIZBALLAH AGAIN CLAIMED THAT IT HAD NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO
CONTINUE ITS ARMED RESISTANCE. GALEANO NOTED THAT
HIZBALLAH LEADER SHAYK MUHAMMAD FADLALLAH IN AN INTERVIEW
IN "AL HAYAT ON MAY 30, 1994, SAID "IF ISRAEL HAS LONG
ARMS, WE DO TOO, JUST LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED IN BUENOS
AIRES..."

5. (U) GALEANO NOTED THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE AMIA
BOMBING, A GROUP CALLING ITSELF ANSAR ALLAH (FOLLOWERS OF
GOD) RELEASED A COMMUNIQUE ON JULY 23, 1994, IN BOTH SIDON
AND BEIRUT, IN WHICH IT STATED THAT "THE OPERATIONS IN
ARGENTINA AND PANAMA ARE PROOF OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE
CONFRONTATION WITH ZIONISM...WHAT HAPPENED IN ARGENTINA AND
PANAMA WILL NOT STOP, WE WILL CONTINUE OUR FIGHT UNTIL WE
EXPEL THE ZIONISTS AND REINSTATE JUSTICE ALL OVER THE WORLD
APPLYING ISLAMIC LAW EVERYWHERE."

6. (U) GALEANO CONTINUED THAT STUDIES PREPARED BY VARIOUS
LAW ENFORCEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES, AMONG THEM HE
MENTIONED THE FBI AND ARGENTINA'S SIDE, HAVE SHOWN THE
LINKS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
IRAN AND HIZBALLAH. THE EVIDENCE HE HAS SEEN TO DATE SHOWS
THAT, AT LEAST AT THE TIME OF THE AMIA BOMBING, THERE
EXISTED A SUBORDINATION OF HIZBALLAH TO CERTAIN IRANIAN
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. HE ADDED, THAT THIS LINK CONTINUES
TO BE A MATTER OF INVESTIGATION, ALTHOUGH HE WARNED THAT

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	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	FMP-00	IMCC-01
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	MR-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 000920

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THIS PART OF THE INVESTIGATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE AFFECTED
BY CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE USE OF INTELLIGENCE-BASED
INFORMATION.

ISRAELI STONEWALLING?

7. (U) THE JUDGE ALSO CALLED UPON THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO
RESPOND TO THE THREE OFFICIAL ARGENTINE REQUESTS FOR
INFORMATION (MADE IN SEPTEMBER 1997, AND FEBRUARY AND
OCTOBER 1998) REGARDING WHAT DOS SANTOS TOLD ISRAELI
CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN MILAN IN JULY 1994, PRIOR TO THE
EMBASSY BOMBING.

[REDACTED]

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8. (C) [REDACTED] RECENTLY EXPRESSED TO US HIS
DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE WAY SIDE, THE ARGENTINE
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, HAD HANDLED THE ARREST OF MOKHTARI.
HE SAID THE VERY VISIBLE "MEDIA SHOW" (AS HE PUT IT) ASPECT
OF THE ARREST ENSURED THAT MOKHTARI WOULD BE AN
UNCOOPERATIVE WITNESS. HE CLAIMED HE WAS UNAWARE THAT SHE
WAS BEING BROUGHT TO ARGENTINA UNTIL THE DAY OF THE ARREST.

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[REDACTED] THE CASE AGAINST THE
FORMER BUENOS AIRES POLICE OFFICERS IMPLICATED IN PROVIDING
THE VEHICLE USED IN THE AMIA BOMBING. WHILE THERE APPEARS
TO BE PLENTY OF EVIDENCE LINKING THEM WITH TRAFFICKING IN
STOLEN AUTOMOBILES, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HE CAN
PROVE THEIR FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF THE USE OF THE VEHICLE.

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ISRAELI EMBASSY CASE

9. (C) [REDACTED] TOLD US THAT GALEANO HAD USED IN THE CONTEXTUAL SECTION OF HIS REPORT ON THE IRAN-HIZBALLAH CONNECTION MUCH OF THE INFORMATION THE SUPREME COURT TEAM HAD ASSEMBLED THROUGH A VARIETY OF SOURCES, INCLUDING THE USG. HE SAID HE IS UNDER NO TIME PRESSURE TO COMPLETE HIS CASE. HOWEVER, HE COULD WELL MAKE ANOTHER RULING IN LATE MARCH REGARDING THE EXTERNAL SIDE OF THE INVESTIGATION, A REPORT WHICH WOULD BE VERY SIMILAR TO GALEANO'S BUT INCLUDING THE ISLAMIC JIHAD CLAIM OF RESPONSIBILITY.

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10. (C) THE ARGENTINE PRESS REPORTED WITH SENSATIONALISTIC HEADLINES ON A MEETING ON FEBRUARY 10 BETWEEN ISRAELI AMBASSADOR AVIRAN AND SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE NAZARENO, JUSTICE MOLINE O'CONNER, AND CANEVARI. THE PRESS CLAIMED THAT THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR HAD COMPLAINED ABOUT THE HANDLING OF THE CASE. [REDACTED] TOLD US THAT, CONTRARY TO THE LOCAL MEDIA'S RATHER SENSATIONALIZED ACCOUNT, THE MEETING HAD BEEN A USEFUL AND FRIENDLY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. THE AMBASSADOR [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] EXPRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE THAT THE INVESTIGATION LAY THE BLAME "IN THE APPROPRIATE LAPS."

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[REDACTED] ADDED THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS NEVER SHARED THE RESULTS OF ITS INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE EMBASSY BOMBING [REDACTED]

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COMMENT

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11. (C) [REDACTED] ARE RESIGNED TO NEVER BEING ABLE TO FIND THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE BOMBINGS. BOTH INVESTIGATIONS APPEAR TO BE COMING TO AN END, ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS UNCLEAR JUST WHEN THEY WILL BE CLOSED. [REDACTED] CLAIM THEY ARE UNDER NO POLITICAL PRESSURE TO EITHER SLOW THEIR INVESTIGATIONS OR TO SPEED THEIR DELIBERATIONS. THE GOA APPEARS READY TO LET THE INVESTIGATORS PURSUE THEIR CASES WHERE THEY WILL AND AT THE PACE THEY WILL, EVEN DURING THIS ELECTION YEAR, AND LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY. ROCHA

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